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SUBJECT: UGANDA MOVES FORWARD WITH ACOTA PROGRAM FOR SOMALIA-BOUND
PEACEKEEPERS

¶1. (SBU) SUMMARY: Senior Ugandan military leaders and African Contingency Operations Training and Assistance (ACOTA) Program officials met in Kampala from March 29-30 2007, to plan peace support operations (PSO) training for Uganda's Somalia-bound peacekeepers. The ACOTA team also began laying the foundation for Uganda's long-term ACOTA partnership. Senior Ugandan military officials including Lieutenant General Katumba Wamala, Commander Land Forces, reaffirmed the Ugandan military's desire for more training and commitment to the ACOTA partnership. He emphasized the need for immediate training and limited equipment support for the rotation of Uganda's next contingent of peacekeepers to Somalia between August and October 2007. Wamala also asked for immediate commencement of ACOTA's train-the-trainer program to support Uganda's achievement of full self-sufficiency in PSO training. END SUMMARY.

UPDF ACOTA Planning

¶2. (SBU) On 29 March 2007, a Department of State sponsored ACOTA Program team led by Chip Beck, ACOTA Program and Policy Coordinator, met in Kampala with Lieutenant General Katumba Wamala, UPDF Land Forces Commander, and Brigadier General S.W. Kayemba, UPDF Director of Training and Operations, to collaborate on the future of the ACOTA program in Uganda. Wamala requested ACOTA PSO training for the next UPDF contingent that would deploy to Somalia, including a Battle Group Headquarters (PSO Force Headquarters) and two battalions that would serve as maneuver elements for the Battle Group. Wamala noted that the decision about when to deploy the next Battle Group to Somalia was not yet definitive, but that it would generally be six to eight months after the first group's arrival in Mogadishu. Since the first group was starting its second month in Somalia, all parties agreed that ACOTA training and equipment support should commence expeditiously. As a result, several decisions were made during the ACOTA-UPDF meeting to accomplish that goal.

SPECIFIC AGREED UPON POINTS

¶3. (SBU) During this meeting, General Wamala and ACOTA agreed to the following:

-- The ACOTA Training Strategy Conference (TSC) will take place 23-27 April at Jinja, Uganda.

-- The UPDF will provide trainers to receive ACOTA "train-the-trainer" PSO training from the beginning of the training, despite the heavy troop demands of Somalia. This would be a major step forward for long-term PSO capacity building and sustainment for Uganda as an ACOTA partner.

-- ACOTA will commence training of the UPDF Battle Group as early as 16 May 2007. The training would begin with simultaneous training

for the Ugandan instructors and the Force HQ Staff training. This training would be immediately followed by concurrent soldier and unit level PSO training for the two Battle Group battalions.

-- The total training time from the commencement of the Force HQ to the end of the battalion/HQ field exercise will be 13 weeks. This will allow the Battle Group to receive the full slate of ACOTA training in time for deployment, but with enough leeway to allow the Force time to conduct all necessary pre-deployment preparations, including administration and leave activities.

-- The Training Strategy Conference will also look forward to the training and deployment of the third Battle Group six months following the deployment of this group, and the eventual training of the first Battle Group that was not afforded the ACOTA training prior to its initial deployment.

-- The UPDF would likely rotate its Somalia Battle Groups every six months for "morale and effectiveness" according to Lt. Gen. Wamala. Thus within one year, ACOTA expects to train the three major Battle Groups (Three Force Staffs and six battalions, each including artillery batteries, tank companies, engineers, and medical teams).

-- By the time the year-long cycle of training is complete, ACOTA anticipates the Uganda instructors would be proficient in ACOTA instruction and able to conduct training with minimal U.S. trainer presence.

-- ACOTA and the UPDF would immediately commence collaboration on tailoring the ACOTA training support equipment package to meet the UPDF's unique PSO training needs and then expeditiously commence requisitioning and delivering the equipment.

Singo Military Training Area

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14. (SBU) On 30 March 2007, the ACOTA team and Deputy Defense Attach accompanied Brigadier General Kayemba to the Singo Military Training Area approximately 90 kilometers outside Kampala. While the roads approaching Singo were primitive, the training area itself was large enough to accommodate the training of two battalions and staff, with existing infrastructure fully capable of supporting the ACOTA training with minimal improvements. Kayemba noted that the UPDF budget was already paying for the upgrades and new construction that the team observed in progress. Uganda plans to make Singo its national Peacekeeper Support Operations Training Center and appears well on the way to implementing its plan.

COMMENT

15. (SBU) The ACOTA team and the UPDF achieved significant progress including agreement for immediate ACOTA PSO training of the next UPDF Battle Group for deployment to Somalia; laying the framework for long-term PSO capacity enhancement in Uganda, including the UPDF's immediate commitment to train its own PSO training cadre; and determining the adequacy of the UPDF Singo training area for PSO training.

BROWNING